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Item # 5
Bill 13 (2017)



Menehune Mac
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April 4, 2017

The Honorable Ron Menor, Chair
Committee on Executive Matters and Legal Affairs
Honolulu City Council
530 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Menor and Councilmembers:

SUBJECT: BILL 13, CD1 - A BILL FOR AN ORDINANCE RELATING TO PUBLIC SIDEWALKS

We, at Menehune Mac, support Bill 13, CD1 that will apply the "sit-lie" law to the business areas of Kalihi. Our sales data shows that the decline is directly attributable to the increase in homelessness and the negative publicity that results from it. We have seen articles on Japanese websites that warn visitors that the area is dangerous and to avoid the area. After years of building our reputation and goodwill in the visitor industry, investments in advertising and marketing to attract customer traffic to the Kapalama area, all of that effort was wiped out by the simple use of the word "abunai" as it related to the sidewalks outside our business.

As mentioned in our previous testimony, our business was able to survive the bursting of the economic bubble in 1994, the loss of business after the 9-11 attacks in 2001, and the recession in 2008. However, the encampment has effectively put a physical fence that is strangling our business and until we are legally able to do something about it, our sales will continue to suffer. If this situation is allowed to continue, customers and employees will continue to fear shopping and working in the area.

The Institute of Human Services made a compelling presentation that the sit-lie enforcement action is necessary to motivate the homeless to take advantage of the services offered. Knowing how complex the issue is, it should not mean that business and commerce should also bear with the consequences until the panacea is found. Small businesses such as ours cannot continue to survive under these conditions. Please give HPD and service providers the tools to return the sidewalks back to the public while servicing those who need the help. Without this relief, many of the businesses in the area are in danger of going under. The situation is that dire.

We thank Councilmember Manahan for proposing this measure and we urge you to pass Bill 13 that supports the businesses and residents of Kalihi.

Sincerely,

Neal Arakaki, President
Menehune Mac

MISC. COM. 1391